



## Manding Ajami samples: Mandinka and Bamana

Valentin Vydrin, Gérard Dumestre

### ► To cite this version:

Valentin Vydrin, Gérard Dumestre. Manding Ajami samples: Mandinka and Bamana. Meikal Mumin, Kees Versteegh. The Arabic script in Africa: Studies in the use of a writing system, Brill, pp.225-260, 2014, Studies in Semitic languages and linguistics, 978-90-04-25679-8. halshs-00948996

**HAL Id: halshs-00948996**

**<https://shs.hal.science/halshs-00948996>**

Submitted on 26 Feb 2014

**HAL** is a multi-disciplinary open access archive for the deposit and dissemination of scientific research documents, whether they are published or not. The documents may come from teaching and research institutions in France or abroad, or from public or private research centers.

L'archive ouverte pluridisciplinaire **HAL**, est destinée au dépôt et à la diffusion de documents scientifiques de niveau recherche, publiés ou non, émanant des établissements d'enseignement et de recherche français ou étrangers, des laboratoires publics ou privés.

*Valentin Vydrin, INALCO, CNRS-LLACAN*

*Gérard Dumestre, INALCO, CNRS-LLACAN*

## *1. Introduction*

The Manding Ajami writing tradition is much less mysterious today than it was thirty or forty years ago, when scholarly literature would settle for its passing mentions and practically no single authentic text was available. However, the number of texts published still remains extremely low, and they reflect poorly on the geographical spread of this writing system. We are still at the stage where every new text introduced into scholarly circulation is a discovery: with a high degree of probability, it represents either a new variety of the writing, a new literary genre, or even establishes the use in a new geographical area where the existence of Ajami was hitherto unknown. The texts presented here exemplify this situation.

In the following, texts of the manuscripts will be represented in four columns: the source texts in Manding Ajami, i.e. Arabic-based script orthography, a Roman script transliteration, a Roman script standard transcription, and an English translation.

In the transliteration, we tried our best to remain true to the Ajami text. We had to interpret spellings in order to segment texts into words,

---

<sup>1</sup> The authors would like to thank Charles Riley who volunteered to correct the English texts.

whenever Arabic script (based) graphemes are written disconnected to the left. This applies to the letters *'alif*, *dāl*, *ḡāl*, *rā'*, *zāy*, *wāw*, which are always spelt disconnected to the following letters in Arabic script. Therefore, it is most often impossible to judge whether a word boundary was intended by the author of the manuscript after such a letter or not. In the standard transcription, Bamana text is represented following the official orthography of Bamana language, while dialectal forms are being eliminated<sup>2</sup>. We suppose that they can be easily restored from the transliteration. Although tones are not marked in Arabic based script, lexical tones are marked in the standard transcription, while contextual and grammatical tonal changes (among them, the tonal article<sup>3</sup>) are ignored.

The Mandinka document is a sample of a magical text. Unlike all the other authentic documents published so far, it is authored, most probably, by an ordinary Muslim, rather than a Muslim cleric, for hunt remains a domain far remote from the sphere of pious Marabouts. 'Allāh and Muḥammad are nevertheless mentioned in these texts, and Arabic words are inserted here and there for possibly extra effectiveness, such as e.g. *tamāli* (3:3, 3:4)<sup>4</sup>, and probably also *qalaqa* (2:2). In essence though, the religious core of this text is quite animist.

---

<sup>2</sup> The Ajami writing reflects a dialectal form, different from the Standard Bamana one.

<sup>3</sup> In Bamana, a definite article is represented by a floating low tone following a noun or a noun group. In current transcription practice, it is rarely marked even in texts with tonal notation.

<sup>4</sup> In referencing to the texts, the first number (preceding the colon) represents the number of the text, and the second one (following the colon) represents the line. For the Bamana two-page texts, the figure preceding a slash represents the number of the text, while the second figure (following the slash) represents the page number, and the third figure, following the colon, represents the line.

The other set of texts is the very first sample of the authentic Bamana writing tradition published.<sup>5</sup> They come from San, an ancient commercial center in the southwestern part of Mali, and might represent the earliest piece ever of authentic Bamana literature.

In the following, the texts are reproduced in digitalized form, provided with an exact Roman script transliteration, a normalized transcription (with tones in Mandinka texts following Creissels et al. 1982), and an English translation including comments. Each text is followed by an analysis of the peculiarities of the Ajami variety.

## *2. Mandinka hunter's incantations.*

The incantations were shown to Valentin Vydrin by Abdulay Daafée, who was his host in the Samakun village (Sédhiou region, Senegal) in October 2007. His oral comments were very helpful in decoding and transliterating of the texts. However, certain passages (given in italics in the Roman transcription) remain obscure, and their respective transliterations and translations therefore remain tentative. In particular, personal pronouns of second singular *í* and third plural *ì* differ only in tone, and the context is usually insufficient to opt for one or the other interpretation. In such cases, decisions were taken more or less at random.

Each incantation begins with an Islamic preamble, followed by magic formulae, which sometimes consist of words which are non-existent in

---

<sup>5</sup> The only Bamana texts published so far (Vydrine 1998) were written at the request of Valentin Vydrin. Therefore, they may be considered as evidence for the study of the orthographic tradition of Bamana Ajami, but they do not exemplify its genres.

Mandinka language (at least, they are absent from Mandinka dictionaries and are not recognized by Mandinka speakers as true words). At the end, the objects and substances are mentioned (apparently, those which are necessary for the magic action), followed by the Arabic word اسمه 'ismuhu' 'his name'.

## Text 1

	Transliteration	Transcription	Translation
بِسْمِ اللَّهِ	bsmi 'llh	1. Bismi llahi	1. By the name of God
سَلَامٌ	sala'ali	2. Salaŋa li	2. Greetings to
مُحَمَّدٍ	muḥam <sup>2</sup> adi	Muhammadi wa	Mohammed and the
وَالْعَلِيِّ	wa'la'liy <sub>1</sub>	l'ŋali Muhammadi . í	Highest Mohammed.
مُحَمَّدٍ ع	muḥam <sup>2</sup> adi ' nari	nari!	Stop!
نَرِ			
شُبُّ نَرِ	šubu nari mina <sup>n</sup>	3. Sùboo nari !	3. Animal, stop! Old
مِنْ كَبْ	kay <sub>2</sub> a kutu tu <sup>n</sup> bu	Mìnankaña kòto	male antelope, ruins
كُتْ تَبْ	bi' 'i ku <sup>n</sup> tu	túnbuŋ bé í kùntu	will cut you (?).
بَا ع كُتْ			
تَبْ تَكُنْ	tu <sup>n</sup> bu ti <sup>n</sup> ku <sup>n</sup> <sub>1</sub> u	4. túnbuŋ t'í kùnunŋ,	4. Ruins won't swallow
فَاكُندَمَا	f <sub>1</sub> a'ku <sup>n</sup> dama'	faakundamaa	you, faakundamaa,
بَاكُندَمَا	ba'ku <sup>n</sup> dama'	baakundamaa.	baakundamaa.
ع يَشُبُّ ع	'i y <sub>2</sub> ašubu 'i	5. í ñáa sùboo , ì	5. Animal is before your
تَدِينَا ع	ta <sup>n</sup> dina' ' saf <sub>1</sub> a' 'i	tàa, díina (jínna?), ì	eyes, take them, bush
سَبَا ع پَا	y <sub>2</sub> a'	s'à fàa í ñáa.	spirit, they will kill it
			before you.
شُتْ كَيَدِينَا	šutu kiy <sub>2</sub> itadina' ?	6. Sùboo kèèñeeta ,	6. The animal has fallen
ء سَبَا ع	saf <sub>1</sub> a' 'i y <sub>2</sub> a'	díina (jínna?), ñ s'à	asleep, bush spirit, I will
ي		fàa í ñáa.	kill it before you.
شُتْ مُسْ	šubu musu 'ita <sup>n</sup> di ?	7. Sùbu musoo	7. Show me a female
عَنْدِ نَا ع	na' ? saf <sub>1</sub> a' tt	yìtandi ñ ná , ñ s'à	animal, I'll kill it.
سَبَا تَت		fàa tata	
تَايُو عِنْ	ti'yuw 'ani <sup>n</sup> mina <sup>n</sup>	8. Tío àníŋ	8. Hair and male
مَنَّا كِي	kaya tiyuw ni <sup>n</sup>	mìnankaña, tío níŋ	antelope, hair and the
تِيُو نَا بَبْ	bu <sup>n</sup> ba <sup>n</sup> sulu	bumbaŋ súloo	root of bumbaŋ.
سَلْ			
اسمه مَسْ	'smh man <sub>1</sub> kara	9. Ismahu mànkara	9. Its name is the horn
كَرْ بَنَمْ	binamu sulawuli <sup>n</sup>	bína mú sùla wùleŋ.	of the mànkara
سَلُولْ			antelope, red monkey.

## Comments

Line 1. The first spelling could be read as خَسْبِي | <hsbiy<sub>1</sub>>. However, such a reading hardly makes any sense. Most probably, it is an ordinary basmala (بِسْمِ | <bsm>) written in a fanciful way.

Line 2. Apparently سَلَّلِي | <sala'ali> *sala'ali* is a modified form of صَلَّى | <ʃl<sup>2</sup>y<sub>1</sub> l-i> which might be an abbreviated version of the Arabic language formula صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ | *ṣalla 'Allah 'alayhu wa sallam* 'May God bless him and grant him peace'. In the second and third incantations, it is spelled as سَلَّلِي | <salali>.

The word *nari* is absent from all available Mandinka dictionaries. The translation 'stop!' was suggested by Abdulay Daafee.

Line 3. *Koto* may be also interpreted as another word for 'male' (it usually appears in compounds *bàakoto* 'he-goat', *sàakoto* 'ram').

Line 4. *Faakundamaa*, *baakundamaa* are ideophones depicting the antelope's walk.

Lines 5, 6. *jínna* 'bush spirit' is a reading suggested by Abdulay Daafee. The literal reading *díina* 'religion' does not fit the context.

Line 6. *kèeñee* is a word from the respectful vocabulary<sup>6</sup> for 'to sleep'.

Line 7. The final element of the line is transcribed here as *tata*. In fact, it might be a decorative element indicating the end of the magic formula. Cf. a similar element at the end of the San Bamana text 5.

Lines 8 and 9. It seems to be an enumeration of ingredients for the fabrication of a fetish or amulet. It looks like they were written post

---

<sup>6</sup> A special register used for expressing respect. For more information, see Vydrin (2008).

factum, in the blank space, and line 9 was fitted into the left margin of the page.

Line 9. *mànkara* or *mànkari* is an unidentified species of antelope.

## Text 2

	Transliteration	Transcription	Translation
سَلَّى مُحَمَّدٍ وَالْعَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ ذِيذِبِ جِبْ قَلَقْ قَلَقْ جِبْ مِنْ كِي كُتْ جِبْ نَتَعَلْ كُدَسِ اسْمُهُ كَسَلْ نَبِمْ	salali muḥam <sup>4</sup> adi wa'la'aliy <sub>1</sub> muḥam <sup>2</sup> adi ḡi <sup>n</sup> bi <sup>n</sup> ḡi <sup>n</sup> bi <sup>n</sup> ḡi <sup>n</sup> bi <sup>n</sup> q <sub>1</sub> alaq <sub>1</sub> a q <sub>1</sub> alaq <sub>1</sub> a ḡi <sup>n</sup> bi <sup>n</sup> mina <sup>n</sup> kaya kutu ḡi <sup>n</sup> bi <sup>n</sup> niti'ala kudasi 'smh kasala ḡa <sup>n</sup> bamu	1. Salali Muhammadi ṡalii Muhammadi. Jimbiṅ jimbiṅ. 2. Jimbiṅ kalaka kalaka jimbiṅ. 3. Mìnaṅ kaña kòto jinbiṅ n'í té à lá 4. kùdasi. Ismuhu kásalaa jàmba mú.	1. Greetings to Mohammed and the Highest Mohammed. <i>Jimbiṅ jimbiṅ.</i> 2. <i>Jimbiṅ kalaka kalaka jimbiṅ.</i> 3. Old male antelope, <i>jimbiṅ.</i> If you don't sing this, 4. be puny. Its name is the leaf of the <i>kasalaa</i> grass.

## Comments

Lines 1-2. *Jimbiṅ kalaka kalaka jimbiṅ* is a magic formula. There is a Mandinka word *jìmbi* 'a headgear with fringes', but it hardly fits this context. *Kalaka* is not a Mandinka word, but might possibly be related to *qalaq* 'anxiety, insomnia (Arabic)'.

Line 4. *Kùdasi* is a verb meaning 'to remain underdeveloped', 'to fail to reach normal size' (absent from Creissles et al. 1982).

*Kásalaa* is an unidentified type of grass, also known as *kàcancároo*.

Abdulay Daafee commented: *Í s'à buru jàṅ* '(After the incantation is pronounced,) you should rub it'.

## Text 3

	Transliteration	Transcription	Translation
سَلَّى مُحَمَّدٍ وَالْعَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ دَجْ دَجْ وَرَكْ وَرَكْ كُنْتُ تَمَالِ سَكْتُ تَمَالِ فَبِ تَمَالِ فُبِ عَبْدًا تَت اسْمِهِ كِسْ مُسْ رَمْ	salali muḥam <sup>2</sup> adi wa'la'aliy <sup>1</sup> muḥam <sup>2</sup> adi dağ <sup>n</sup> dağ <sup>n</sup> warika <sup>n</sup> warika <sup>n</sup> ku <sup>n</sup> tu <sup>n</sup> tama'li sakata <sup>n</sup> tama'li f <sub>1</sub> abi tama'li f <sub>1</sub> ubi 'abada <sup>n</sup> tt ʔsmih kisi musu ra <sup>n</sup> mu	1. Salali Muhammadi wa-l-ṣali: Muhammadi. 2. Dajin dajin warikan warikan kuntun, 3. tamaali sákatun tamaali fàa bìi. 4. Tamaali fó bìi ábadaṇ. 5. Ismihu kèse mósoraṇ mú.	1. Greetings to Mohammed and the Highest Mohammed. 2. Cut <i>dajin dajin warikan warikan</i> , 3. always, that is, always, to kill today. 4. Always, up to this day, forever. 5. Its name is a rubber bullet.

## Comments

Line 2. *dajin dajin warikan warikan* are magic formulae - These are not Mandinka words.

Lines 3, 4. تَمَالِ | <tama'li> *tamaali* is certainly Arabic *tamalli* 'always' (this word is absent from the everyday Mandinka).

Line 3. سَكْتُ | <sakatan> *sakatan* was read by Abdulay Daafee as *sókotun* 'that is'. Cf. in Creissels et al. 1982 *sàko*, *sòko* 'surtout, encore plus, à plus fort raison'.

Line 5. *Mósoraṇ* is an instrument name from the verb *móso* 'to rub while spitting and pronouncing incantations'. This line denotes the destination of the incantation.

## 3. Grammatological remarks to the Mandinka hunters' incantations



On the grounds of the spelling of the palatal nasal sonant  $n^7$ , these texts would belong to the main Mandinka Ajami variety (cf. Vydrin, this volume):  $n$  < $\tilde{n}$ > is OK represented by ي. Further grammatological characteristics of this document are:

- -s is usually written as *sīn*, except for one case where it is written as *šīn*, i.e. شُبْ | <šubu> *sùbu* 'animal, meat'.
- -j (a voiced palatal affricate) is spelled as either ج or چ, with the latter appearing both word-initially and word-finally<sup>8</sup>.
- ع is used as support for any diacritic expressing a vowel, when it is not preceded by a consonant. Furthermore, it also is used for spelling of the palatal oral sonant  $y$ , although there is only one occurrence in the text, i.e. عَتْدِ | <'ita<sup>n</sup>di> *yìtandi* 1:7 'to show'.
- The nasal syllabic phoneme  $\eta$  (which appears in Mandinka in only two words: *ŋ* 'I', *ŋ* 'we') is written as *hamza*, i.e. ʾ (Which could also be an 'ain, i.e. ع) without any support or vocalic diacritics.
- Letters representing emphatics in the orthography of Arabic are not used, with the only exception of the rather obscure word فَلَاقَ | <q<sub>1</sub>alaq<sub>1</sub>a> (2:2).
- *Nūn*, *qāf* and *fā'* are written in the Mağribī way: In word-final positions, *nūn* has normally (with only one exception) no dot, while *qāf* is always spelled with one dot above, i.e. ف, and *fā'* always with one dot below, i.e. ڤ.

---

<sup>7</sup> In the text, there is not a single word containing a  $p$ , which makes the other diagnostic criterion (see Vydrin, present volume) inapplicable.

<sup>8</sup> In one word  $j$  is probably written using *dāl*, دَالْ | <dina'> (incantation 1, lines 5 and 6). However, we are not sure about the interpretation of this word.

- Only the three standard vocalic diacritics, i.e.  $\bar{}$ ,  $\underline{}$ , and  $\dot{}$ , are used and there are no attempts to differentiate closed and mid vowels.
- 'Alif, wāw, and yā' do not indicate in any way length of vowels. These letters appear mainly at the end of words, sometimes in disagreement with the preceding vocalic diacritic, and always without any visible correlation to vowel length, e.g.  $\text{بَا}$  *bé* 'imperfective marker'. However, such 'fake length' is much less frequent than in some other Mandinka Ajami texts.
- The syllable-final nasal element is usually rendered by *tanwīn*, e.g.  $\text{سُلُولِ}$  | <sulwuli<sup>n</sup>> *sùla wùlen* 'red monkey' (1:9), and rarely by *nūn* as in  $\text{مَنْ كَر}$  | <man kara> *mànkara* 'species of antelope' (1:9).

#### 4. Bamana texts from San

In 1972, during one of his sojourns in Mali, Gérard Dumestre dispatched a friend of his, Almamy Malik Yattara, to the ancient commercial town of San to look for old Bamana manuscripts. Almamy Yattara was a remarkable representative of the Muslim intelligentsia of Mali, and two books were dedicated to him (Yattara & Salvaing 2000; 2003). Being a Muslim cleric, it was much easier for him than for a white man to gain confidence among his coreligionists. A couple of weeks later, Almamy Yattara returned to Bamako with copies of five manuscripts: Bory Bary, the head of one of the Islamic families of San, allowed him (for a modest recompense) to copy by hand texts, which had originally been written by Bary's father, Amadu Bary, in 1911.

Being literate in French, Almamy Yattara provided each manuscript with a brief comment, which yet proved difficult to understand at times. These comments are reproduced here in an English translation, while the French originals are given in footnotes in the author's own orthography. There is also a comment written by Almamy Yattara referring to the entire set of the documents:

The length of this sheet is equal to the origin. I have written them from a white paper, the characters are equal.

The gift for these five documents was 6000 Malian Francs, for I gave 3000 Francs for two initial ones, when I saw that I was too tough, and I did it in order to have more, if any. And for the other three manuscripts I gave 3000 Franc. It is the time of working the farm. Nobody has time. By Almamy Yattara.<sup>9</sup>

Today, 39 years after the manuscripts were copied by Almamy Yattara and exactly 100 years after they were created, we proceed to their publication.

## Text 1

Almamy Yattara's comment:

---

<sup>9</sup> The original text:

les longere de sette feille et egal de loriginal. je les estrié de papié Bilansse le karactere et egalla  
le cado de cet 5 dockimen. eté 6000 faran. pissique les 2 prumier je done 3000 F lorssque jevi jessi tro diure et je fai sa pour avar encor si yana. et avec le 3 maniscrit- lotre je done 3000 F. ya le travaus de samnp. toule monde nonpa de tan. par Almamy Yattara

The possessor of the document "Karantela Kolomba, the sacred well of San", Bory Bary. Written by his father in Arabic characters in San for him in 1911. The copyist Almamy Malik Yattara in San in 1972.<sup>10</sup>

## Page 1

	Transliteration	Transcription	Translation
كِرَنْتِلَا كُلْمَبَا دُكُ بِيَا سُرُ يَنْ	karan <sup>0</sup> tela ku <sub>1</sub> lu <sub>1</sub> m <sup>0</sup> ba'. duk <sub>4</sub> -u beya' su <sub>1</sub> ru <sub>1</sub> yan <sub>1</sub> <sup>0</sup>	1. Karantela kòlonba. Dùgu bée y'à sòrɔ yàn	1. Big well of Karantela. When the entire village found it here,
تُمْمِنْ دُكُ سِكْرُ كُكْلَنْ سُرُ يَنْ مَا كُرُو يَا فَا أُو بِي كُ كْلَنْ تَنْ دِي نِفْلُو نَانْ	tumamin <sub>1</sub> <sup>0</sup> . duk <sub>4</sub> -u sik <sub>4</sub> ira kaku <sub>1</sub> lu <sub>1</sub> n <sub>1</sub> <sup>0</sup> su <sub>1</sub> ru <sub>1</sub> yan <sub>1</sub> <sup>0</sup> ma' ku <sub>1</sub> ru <sub>1</sub> w <sup>0</sup> ya' f <sub>1</sub> o 'ʔw yey <sub>1</sub> ku <sub>1</sub> - ku <sub>1</sub> lu <sub>1</sub> n <sub>1</sub> <sup>0</sup> tanay <sub>1</sub> de yey <sub>1</sub> nif <sub>1</sub> ulaw <sup>0</sup> na'na	2. tuma mín , dùgu sìgira kà kòlon sòrɔ yàn. 3. Maa kòrɔw y'à fɔ ánw yé kó kòlon tàna dè yé ní fúlaw nàna,	2. when the village was founded the well was here. 3. Old people told us that the taboo of the well is: if Fulbe come,
أَكْنَابِي كَا لَجِي. بَر نِفْلُو يَا لَجِي أَبْيِي نَا كُنَادِيرِي نَو تِي. أ تَكْ بَسَا نَا مَسَا	'ʔu kana' yey <sub>1</sub> ka' lağey <sub>1</sub> . br nif <sub>1</sub> ulaw <sup>0</sup> ya' lağey <sub>1</sub> 'ʔa buf <sub>1</sub> iyey <sub>1</sub> na' kuna'diyray <sub>1</sub> niw tey <sub>1</sub> . 'ʔa tik <sub>4</sub> -i bisa' na'ʔ masa'	4. ù kàn 'à yé k 'à lájé. Bàri ní fúlaw y'à lájé à b'ù fíyen 5. n'à kùnnadíyara, n'ò té, à tigi b é sà. Ní à má sà,	4. they should not see it. But if Fulbe see it, it will blind them, 5. if they are lucky, otherwise, they will die. If he does not die,
أَبْيِي. كِرَنْتِلَا كُلْمَبَا تَلَنْك بِكَا دَل سَنُو وَسْ. نَمْنِكْ تَمْ سَرِي مَو بَتَا مَنِكْ كُولْ كَو. مِينْ تَكْ كُ سَنْكِيرِي نِتْلَنْكْ مَكْ أ دَلْ جَكْ تَسْرُ أ بِلْ كِي كَلَنْكْ	'ʔa bif <sub>1</sub> iyey <sub>1</sub> . karan <sup>0</sup> tela ku <sub>1</sub> lu <sub>1</sub> m <sup>0</sup> ba' tu <sub>1</sub> lu <sub>1</sub> n <sup>0</sup> k-e bik-e 'ʔ da la san <sup>0</sup> wu <sub>1</sub> wu <sub>1</sub> san <sub>1</sub> <sup>0</sup> . nimu <sub>1</sub> nik-e tuma seray <sub>1</sub> maw <sup>0</sup> bita' mu <sub>1</sub> nik-e ku <sub>1</sub> w la. ku <sub>1</sub> w. miyn <sub>1</sub> <sup>0</sup> tu <sub>1</sub> k <sub>4</sub> -u <sub>1</sub> k-u <sub>1</sub> san <sup>0</sup> keyrey <sub>1</sub> nitulu <sub>1</sub> n <sup>0</sup> k-e mak-e 'ʔa dala ġek <sub>4</sub> -e tesu <sub>1</sub> ru <sub>1</sub> 'ʔu bif <sub>1</sub> u <sub>1</sub> lu <sub>1</sub> katulu <sub>1</sub> nk <sub>4</sub> -e key <sub>1</sub>	6. à b é fíyen. Karantela kòlonba, túlonkɛ bé ké à dálá 7. sà n ó sà n . Ní mónniketuma séra, màaw b é táa mónni ké 8. kò lá. Kò mín tógɔ kó Sankeeree. 9. Ní túlonkɛ má ké à dálá, jéɣé té sòrɔ. Ù bé fólɔ 10. kà túlonkɛ ké	6. he will become blind. Plays are organized near the big well Karantela 7. every year. When the time of fishing comes, people go to fish 8. to the river. The river whose name is Sankere. 9. If games are not played near it, there will be no fish. First, 10. they play near

<sup>10</sup> The original text:

le détenteur de docimen Karantéla Kolomba le piu sacré de- san. Bory Bary escri par son pere an karactere- arabe a san pour loui, en 1911 a san. le copisste Almamy malick Yattara a san en 1972.

فَلْ كُلُّ دَ لَ كَسْرُ كَا كَيَا وَكَيَا مُنِكَبُو بِيْجَ سَنْكِيرَ لَ وَ تَمْ تَلَنْجَ مُنِكَبِيرَ بِنَ أَيْ كُلُّ دَ لَ وَ يَكُنْ بِكْ مُنِكَبِي يَرُ لَ. سَنْكِيرَ لَ. وُ بِي سَنْوُ سَنَ نِدُكْ مَا بِلَ سُمَى نَبِي	f <sub>1</sub> u <sub>1</sub> lu <sub>1</sub> ku <sub>1</sub> lu <sub>1</sub> n <sub>1</sub> <sup>0</sup> da la. kasu <sub>1</sub> ru <sub>1</sub> ka' k <sub>4</sub> iyeya' wu <sub>1</sub> ku <sub>1</sub> f <sub>1</sub> ey <sub>1</sub> mu <sub>1</sub> nik <sub>4</sub> ebaw <sup>0</sup> biğik <sub>4</sub> -i san <sup>0</sup> keyre la wu <sub>1</sub> tuma tulu <sub>1</sub> n <sup>0</sup> k <sub>4</sub> -e min <sup>0</sup> keyra yen <sub>1</sub> <sup>0</sup> 'ʔy <sub>1</sub> ku <sub>1</sub> lu <sub>1</sub> n <sub>1</sub> <sup>0</sup> da la. wu <sub>1</sub> y <sub>3</sub> u <sub>1</sub> k <sub>4</sub> u <sub>1</sub> n <sub>1</sub> <sup>0</sup> bik-e mu <sub>1</sub> nikey <sub>1</sub> yu <sub>1</sub> ru <sub>1</sub> la. sankey <sub>1</sub> r la. wu <sub>1</sub> yey <sub>1</sub> sanwu <sub>1</sub> wu <sub>1</sub> san <sub>1</sub> . niduk <sub>4</sub> -u ma' bila sumay <sub>1</sub> by <sub>3</sub> ey <sub>1</sub>	fóɓ kòlon dálá, kà sòrɔ kà jànya 11. wò k ɓfè mónnikεbaaw bé jigin Sankeere la . Wò tuma túlonkε 12. mín k éra yèn à yé (?) kòlon dálá. Wò jògɔn bé ké mónnikεyɔɔ lá. 13. Sankeere la . Wò yé sà n ó sà n . Ní dùgu m 'à bìla , sùman bé jè,	the well, then they move away 11. then the fishers descend to Sankere. At that time the game 12. that is played there ...? near the well. The same thing is done at the fishing place, 13. near Sankere. It happens every year. If the village does not abandon it (the rite), food will be abundant, 14. the harvest will be good, the peace will advance. If the village abandons it, food 15. will be scarce, diseases will get ahead, there will be a war in the country, rulers 16. will die, children will fall ill, fire will wreak havoc.
سُرُ بَكْ سَبِنَ لَ هِيرِي بَتَا يَا نِدُكْ يَا بِلَ سُمُ	su <sub>1</sub> ru <sub>1</sub> bik-e sene la. heyrey <sub>1</sub> bita' ya'. niduk <sub>4</sub> -u ya' bila suman <sub>1</sub> -	14. sòrɔ bé ké sènε lá, héré bé táa já. Ní dùgu y'à bìla, sùman	14. the harvest will be good, the peace will advance. If the village abandons it, food
بَكَلِيَا بَنَّا بَتَا يَا كَلِيكْ جَمَنَّا كُنْ مَسَاوْ	bk <sub>4</sub> leya' bana' bita' ya' kelebik-e ġamana' ku <sub>1</sub> nu <sub>1</sub> masa'w <sup>0</sup>	15. bé gèleya, bàna b é táa já, kèlε bé ké jàmana kónɔ, mäsaw	15. will be scarce, diseases will get ahead, there will be a war in the country, rulers
بِسَا دِمَسَوْ بِيْنَا تَسْمَا بِنْتَلِكْ يَرُوْ لَ	bisa' dimis'aw <sup>0</sup> bibana' tasuma' bity <sub>3</sub> lik-e yu <sub>1</sub> ru <sub>1</sub> w <sup>0</sup> la	16. bé sà, dénmisεnw bé bàna, tásuma b é tíjɛli ké yóɔw lá.	16. will die, children will fall ill, fire will wreak havoc.

## Page 2

كُلُّ دُكْلُوْ بَا دُ دُنُوْ تَا يُرُ دُنْ	ku <sub>1</sub> lu <sub>1</sub> n <sub>1</sub> <sup>0</sup> duk <sub>4</sub> ulew <sup>0</sup> de b' du <sub>1</sub> . dunaw <sup>0</sup> t' yu <sub>1</sub> ru <sub>1</sub> du <sub>1</sub> n <sub>1</sub> <sup>0</sup>	1. Kòlon, dùgulenw dè b 'à dón. Dúnanw t 'à yóɔw dón, 2. fóo dugulenw . Dùgulenw ye Taraworew yé , Teeraw yé móriw yé. 3. Ní dénw wólola Taraworew lá , ù bé táa n'à yé yèn k'à fí kòlon yé 4. "Karantela kòlonba, á ní sú! É dè yé dùgulen yé , é dè yé dúnanw	1. Natives know the well. Foreigners don't know its whereabouts, 2. only natives do. Natives are Traore, and Tera are Muslims. 3. When Traore children are born, they bring the child there and say to the well: 4. "Karantela, the Big Well, good evening! You are the native, it is you
فُوْ دُكْلُوْ دُكْلُوْ يَتَرَوُ بِي تَيْرَوُ بَمُرُوْ بِي نِدُوْ وَلَا تَرَوُ رُوْ لَ. بَتَا نَا بِيْنِ كَابْ كُلُّ بِي كَرَنْتَلْ كَلْمَبَا أَنْسُ إِدِي دُكْلَبِي إِدْ	f <sub>1</sub> u <sub>1</sub> w duk <sub>4</sub> ulew <sup>0</sup> . duk <sub>4</sub> ulew <sup>0</sup> yetarawu <sub>1</sub> rew <sup>0</sup> yey <sub>1</sub> tey <sup>a</sup> raw <sup>0</sup> yemu <sub>1</sub> riw <sup>0</sup> yey <sub>1</sub> nidew <sup>0</sup> wu <sub>1</sub> lu <sub>1</sub> l'a tarawu <sub>1</sub> rew <sup>0</sup> la. 'ʔu bita' na' yeyen <sub>1</sub> <sup>0</sup> ka' f <sub>1</sub> u <sub>1</sub> ku <sub>1</sub> lu <sub>1</sub> n <sub>1</sub> <sup>0</sup> yey <sub>1</sub> karan <sup>0</sup> tela ku <sub>1</sub> lu <sub>1</sub> m <sup>0</sup> ba' 'ʔa nisu 'ʔie de yey <sub>1</sub> duk <sub>4</sub> ulen <sup>0</sup> yey <sub>1</sub> 'ʔie de yey <sub>1</sub> dunaw <sup>0</sup>		

<p> يَبِي دُنُو  جَتِكِي دُنْ  سُرْل دُنْ  مُسْدَانْ  وَلِمَا بِنْت  نَانْ  أَبَا كُنْكَ بِلْ  كُلْ دَالْ  سَبِي سَبَا  تَلْبِي  أَنِكْرَنِي  بَابْ أَنْ  وَرْدُكَ أ  بَلَنْ كَبُو  بِلْ كَرِي  كَبِنَا يِي </p>	<p> ğatik<sub>4</sub>iyey<sub>1</sub>    dunan<sub>1</sub><sup>0</sup>  su<sub>1</sub>ru<sub>1</sub>la.    dunan<sub>1</sub> mus-  <sup>2</sup>u    na'na.    walima'  den<sup>0</sup>te na'na  'ʔu ba' kulu<sub>1</sub>n<sup>0</sup>k<sub>4</sub>uelu<sub>1</sub>  ku<sub>1</sub>lu<sub>1</sub>n<sub>1</sub><sup>0</sup> da' la siyey<sub>1</sub>  saba'    tilebif<sub>1</sub>ey<sub>1</sub>  'ʔaniku<sub>1</sub>ru<sub>1</sub>n<sup>0</sup>f<sub>1</sub>ey<sub>1</sub>  ba'    f<sub>1</sub>a    'ʔani.  wu<sub>1</sub>ru<sub>1</sub>duk<sub>4</sub>-u.    'ʔu  bilaban<sub>1</sub><sup>0</sup>.    kadew<sup>0</sup> bila  ku<sub>1</sub>ray<sub>1</sub>    kasek<sub>4</sub>ina'  yey<sub>1</sub> </p>	<p> 5. jàtigi yé, dúnan sòrɔla.  Dúnanmuso nàna, wálima dénc    ε nàna".  6.    Ù b    'à kòlonkolon k    ɔ̀lon dálá sì    ɲε sàba tilebin f    è    àní kóɔɔn fè,  7.    bá fàn àní wòrodugu. Ù b    é lábán kà dénw bìla kó lá kà sègin n'à yé  8. só kónɔ. Ní dén kùndi séra , kòlon níɔɔɔ bɛ́ bɔ́ sògo lá  9. ní wòro lá ní dègε kùru sàba , wò bɛ́ dí kòlon ná sú fè dògoli lá  10. màa té bèn ní màa yé dùgutilama fè, wò tùmá. À bánná. </p>	<p> 5.    who    hosts strangers, there is a stranger. A foreign woman has come, or a man has come".  6. They roll the child near the well thrice on the western side and on the eastern side,  7. in the north and in the south. When they finish, they put the child on their back and bring him back  8. home. When the time of baptism comes, a share of the well is taken from the meat  9. and from the cola nuts, and three lumps of dough, this is given to the well by night secretly  10. by midnight, at the time when one meets nobody. It is the end. </p>
--	---	---	---

## Text 2

Almamy Yattara's comment:

The possessor of the document "Janaba koli" is the same Bory Bary, inherited from his father who wrote (it) in order to teach religion to the Bamana people. The copyist Almamy Malik Yattara.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>11</sup> The original text:

le detantere de docimen de janaba koli le meme Bory Bary airite a son pere que escri pour - ensenge les Banbara en religion. le copissite Almamy malick Yattara.

	Transliteration	Transcription	Translation
نَبِيَّ جَنَاب كُولِي جَنَابْ كُول بِكْ أَبْ كَنْ جِي سَنِيَّالْنَبِيَّ يَقُلْ كْ إِكْرُلْ كُولْ إِتْبِكْ فُلْ كُولْ كَأْ إِدَا مُكْرٍ	nin <sup>0</sup> yey <sub>1</sub> ģn'b kwliyey <sub>1</sub> ġana'ba ku <sub>1</sub> wli bik <sub>4</sub> -e 'ʔa bik-e ni ġiy sanya'lenyey <sub>1</sub> 'ʔi bif <sub>1</sub> u <sub>1</sub> lu <sub>1</sub> k-a 'ʔi ku <sub>1</sub> ru <sub>1</sub> la ku <sub>1</sub> w ka' 'ʔi tek-e f <sub>1</sub> ila ku <sub>1</sub> w ka' 'ʔi d' muk <sub>4</sub> uri	1. Nìn yé jànaba kòli yé. 2. Jànaba kòli b é ké, à b é ké ní jí sáníyalen yé . Í b é fólò kà 3. í kórɔla kò kà í téɣɛ fíla kò kà í dá múguri	1. These are the ablutions. 2. The ablutions are performed with clean water. First of all, 3. wash your lower parts and your both hands, rinse your mouth,
كَأْ إِنْ كُولْ كَأْ يَبَا كُولْ كَأْ إِنْ فُلْ كُولْ كُنْ كُولْ مَسَا إِنْ مَسَا كَأْ إِنْ سَبْ كُولْ وَتُمْ إِنْ بَا كُولْ دَمِنْ إِنْ بِلْ نَكْنَكْلِي كَا كُولْ سَبْ سَبْ كَأْ إِنْ بِلْ كُولْ كَأْ كَنِي بِلْ كَا نَمْبِلْ	ka' 'ʔi nun <sup>0</sup> ku <sub>1</sub> w k-i 'ʔi y <sub>4</sub> eda' ku <sub>1</sub> w k-i 'ʔi bu <sub>1</sub> lu <sub>1</sub> f <sub>1</sub> ila ku <sub>1</sub> w k-i 'ʔi kun <sup>0</sup> k <sub>4</sub> u <sub>1</sub> lu <sub>1</sub> masa' k-i 'ʔi tulu <sub>1</sub> masa' k-i 'ʔi sen <sup>0</sup> ku <sub>1</sub> w wu <sub>1</sub> tuma 'ʔi bina' ku <sub>1</sub> wli dmine 'ʔi bif <sub>1</sub> u <sub>1</sub> lu <sub>1</sub> ni kun <sup>0</sup> k <sub>4</sub> ulu <sub>1</sub> yey <sub>1</sub> ka' kuw siy <sub>4</sub> ey <sub>1</sub> saba k-a 'ʔi f <sub>1</sub> an <sup>0</sup> kele ku <sub>1</sub> w      kiniy <sub>1</sub> bulu <sub>1</sub> f <sub>1</sub> ey <sub>1</sub> ka' numabu <sub>1</sub> lu <sub>1</sub> ku <sub>1</sub> w ka' laġey <sub>1</sub> niġiyy <sub>1</sub> sera 'ʔa bela 'ʔi biġiyy <sub>1</sub> lase 'ʔi k- tu <sub>1</sub> wn'á' ka' ġiyk-i 'ʔi ġuw kunaw <sup>0</sup> ma' 'ʔi biġiy <sub>1</sub> lase 'ʔi ka' ka'na'. ka' ġik <sub>4</sub> -i 'ʔi bara ku <sub>1</sub> ru <sub>1</sub> ma' 'ʔi kaġan <sup>0</sup> tu <sub>1</sub> 'ʔi yere l'a 'ʔi kana' sey <sub>1</sub> 'ʔi keya' la ni'ʔi bulu <sub>1</sub> yey <sub>1</sub> wu <sub>1</sub> tuma w ku <sub>1</sub> wli kele 'ʔ biywasa seliġiy <sub>1</sub> la. wu <sub>1</sub> de	4. kà í nún kò k 'í ɲéda kò k'í bólo 5. fíla kò k 'í kùnkolo màsá <sup>12</sup> k'í túlo màsá 6. k'í sèn kò . Wò tùma í b éná kòli dámìnɛ. 7. Í b é fólò ní kùnkolo yé k 'à kò sìɲɛ sàba 8. k'í fàn kélen kò kínibolo f è, kà númabolo 9. kò k 'à lájé ní jí séra à b éé lá. Í b é jí lásé 10. í kòton ná kà jí ké í jùkunanw mà . Í b é jí lásé 11. í kó à ká nà kà jìgin í bàrak ɔɔ mà, í ká jàntó í yèɛ lá 12. í kàná sé í kèya lá ní í bólo yé. Wò tùma wò kòli 13. kélen, à b 'í wàsa sélìjì lá . Wò	4. wash your nose, wash your face, wash both of your 5. hands, scrape your head and your ears, 6. wash your feet. Then begin your ablutions. 7. Start with your head and wash it thrice, 8. wash one side with your right hand, wash your left 9. hand and examine if water has reached everywhere. Bring water 10. to the lower part of your back, pour water on your buttocks. Make it in a way 11. that the water may reach the lower belly, take care of 12. not touching your private parts with your hand. Then the ablutions 13. are performed, the ablution water

<sup>12</sup> A form inexistent in Standard Bamana, which might be Maninka in origin.

دېي جناب كولپي	yey <sub>1</sub> ġn'b ku <sub>1</sub> wliyey <sub>1</sub>	dè yé jànakoli yé	has sufficed you. These are the religious ablutions
مَنْفُورَ اللَّهِ سِرَايَ لَ	min <sup>u</sup> f <sub>1</sub> u <sub>1</sub> wra sira'y <sub>1</sub> la	'Il <sup>2a</sup> h 14. mín f óra Ála síra lá.	14. that were mentioned in God's way.
اللَّهُ مَا أَنْ دِمْنَا ع امیں.	'Il <sup>2a</sup> h ma' demena' 'myn <sub>1</sub> .	'?n <sub>1</sub> <sup>u</sup> 15. Ála má án dèmena. Àmiina.	15. May God help us. Amen!

### Text 3

Almamy Yattara's comment:

The possessor of the document "Kalan bidamine ni alatogo ye", Bory Bary, inherited from his father, the same Madou Bari, who wrote (it) in order to teach the Bamana people. The copyist Almamy Malik Yattara in San in 1972.<sup>13</sup>

### Page 1

	Transliteration	Transcription	Translation
كَلَنْ بَدَمِينِ نِ اللَّهُ تُكْبِي أَنْ صَلَّى اللَّهُ تَيْرَ لَا مِينَ تُكَدْ مُحَمَّدُ هِنِي نَكْسِي بِأَكْ أ كَ سِلَامِيَا	kalan <sup>u</sup> bidamine ni 'Il <sup>2a</sup> h tu <sub>1</sub> k <sub>4</sub> u <sub>1</sub> yey <sub>1</sub> '?n <sub>1</sub> šalila 'Il <sup>2a</sup> h tiyra la' miyn <sub>1</sub> <sup>u</sup> tu <sub>1</sub> k <sub>4</sub> -u <sub>1</sub> k-u <sub>1</sub> mħmd hin ey <sub>1</sub> nikisi bi'? k-a. 'ʔa k-u <sub>1</sub> sila'meya'	1. Kàlan b é dāmìnε ní Ála t ógo yé àní sálila Ála círa lá 2. mín t ógo kó Muhammad, hínε ní kísi b é à kàn . À kó sìlamεya	1. Learning begins with the name of God and greeting to the Messenger of God 2. whose name is Muhammad, he is merciful and he is the Saviour. Besides, Islam
سَمَاسِنِ بِي دُورُ بِي كَسِرِيَكْ تَنِيَّتْ مَسْ مَكْ فُو نِمَسْ	sama'sen <sub>1</sub> <sup>u</sup> yey <sub>1</sub> duwru yey <sub>1</sub> kasereyak-e tiy <sub>3</sub> batu masa mak-e f <sub>1</sub> u <sub>1</sub> w nimasa	3. sàmasen yé dúuru yé : kà sèereya k é tìɛbaato màsa máke <sup>14</sup> 4. f́ ní màsa kélen	3. has its five buttresses: to witness the verity of the King Lord: 4. say that Lord is

<sup>13</sup> The original text:

le detantere de locimen kalan bidamine ni alatogo ye Bory Bary airite a son pere le meme Amadou Bari que eciri pour enssege le Bambara. le copisste - Almamy malick yattara. a san en 1972

<sup>14</sup> The syntax of this phrase is not clear.



كَلْبِي مِينِي الله محمد فَنِي الله ك تِينْدُ كَلْ جَنْ سَل لَا اَنْ سَنِيَا كَسْ سُنْكَو لْ كَا زَكَا بُو.	kelen <sup>u</sup> yey <sub>1</sub> miyn <sup>0</sup> yey <sub>1</sub> 'Il <sup>2a</sup> h mḥmd f <sub>1</sub> anay <sub>1</sub> 'Il <sup>2a</sup> h k-a tiyden <sup>0</sup> du <sub>1</sub> ka'ʔi ġiġan <sub>1</sub> <sup>0</sup> sali la' 'ʔani saniya' kasun <sub>1</sub> <sup>0</sup> sun <sup>0</sup> kalu <sub>1</sub> w la ka' zaka' bu <sub>1</sub> w.	yé mín yé Ála , Muhamadu fána Ála kà ciden dòn;	one, and it is God, and Muhammad is the Prophet of God;
كُهْجَكْ نِسْبَا بِي نَنْدُورْ نَنْ دِي سَلَامِيَا نِمَا بِي نَنْ دَنْ كَا بَارْ كَبِرْ سَلَامِيَا بَقِيَا يُمْنِيَا يُمُونِي ا ك الله تَنْتِكِي كَا محمد تَنْتِكِيَا ا كَا مَلِكُو	kahiġik-e niseba' yey <sub>1</sub> nin <sup>0</sup> duwru, nunun <sub>1</sub> <sup>0</sup> de yey <sub>1</sub> sil'meya' yey <sub>1</sub> nima' yey <sub>1</sub> ninun <sub>1</sub> <sup>0</sup> du <sub>1</sub> n <sub>1</sub> <sup>0</sup> ka' ba'ra. 'ʔ keyra sila'mayey <sub>1</sub> . y <sub>3</sub> uman <sup>0</sup> ya'.	5. kà í jǐjà sáli lá àní sániya ; kà sún súnkalo lá ; kà jáka bó;	5. to be assiduous in prayer and in cleanliness; to keep Lent; to donate alms;
تَنْتِكِي كَا اَلْجَنْ تَنْتِكِي كَا جَهَنَّمْ تَنْتِكِيَا فَنِي كَا اَلْكِوْمْ	tiy <sub>3</sub> tk <sub>4</sub> iyay <sub>1</sub> ka' 'ʔal <sup>0</sup> ġan <sup>2a</sup> tiy <sub>3</sub> tk <sub>4</sub> iyay <sub>1</sub> ka' ġah <sup>2a</sup> an <sup>2a</sup> ama tiy <sub>3</sub> tk <sub>4</sub> iya' f <sub>1</sub> anay <sub>1</sub> ka' 'ʔal <sup>0</sup> kiyaw <sup>0</sup> ma	6. kà híji k é n'í sé b'à yé . Nìn dúuru , nìnnu dè yé sìlamεya yé. 7. Ní màa yé nìnnu dón k'à báara , à kéra sìlama yé . Nùmanya.	6. to make hadj if you can. These five (duties), it is the Islam. 7. If a person knows these (duties) and performs them, he is a Muslim. Goodness.
دُ وُ تَنْتِكِي وُ دِيْمَا كْ سَلَامَا يُمْنِيَا سَلَامَا اَبُو كَلِ الله وَكَلِ يُمْنِيَا. وَكَلِ دِي بِي نِمَا يَمِنْ سَرْ ا كَا بِنِ الله دِي يَا دِيْمَا نِمَا مِيْنِ سَرْ ا كَا دُ الله دِي مَا	du <sub>1</sub> wu <sub>1</sub> tiy <sub>3</sub> tk <sub>4</sub> iyay <sub>1</sub> wu <sub>1</sub> de bima' ke sila'ma' y <sub>3</sub> uman <sup>0</sup> yey <sub>1</sub> . sila'ma' 'ʔabiwakali 'Il <sup>2a</sup> h la'. wakali y <sub>3</sub> umunyey <sub>1</sub> . wakali de yey <sub>1</sub> nima' yemin <sub>1</sub> <sup>0</sup> su <sub>1</sub> ru <sub>1</sub> 'a ka' du <sub>1</sub> en <sub>1</sub> 'Il <sup>a</sup> h de ya' diyma' nima' miyn <sub>1</sub> <sup>0</sup> su <sub>1</sub> ru <sub>1</sub> 'ʔi k' du <sub>1</sub> 'Il <sup>a</sup> h de ma'	8. Nùmanya: nùman yé í ká Ála tìṇetigiya kà Muhamadu tìṇetigiya, í ká mèlekew 9. tìṇetigiya, kà àlijana tìṇetigiya kà jàhanama tìṇetigiya fána kà álikiyama 10. dón wò tìṇetigiya, wò dè bé màa k é sìlamε nùman yé. Sìlamε 11. à bé wàkali Álla lá. Wàkali nùman yé. Wàkali dè yé: ní màa yé mín sòrɔ, 12. à k 'à d ón, Ála dè y 'à d 'í mà ; n'í má mín s òrɔ, í k 'à dón, Ála dè m'à	8. Goodness: It is good that you recognize the truth of God and Muhammad, the truth of 9. angels, the truth of Paradise, and also the truth of Hell, the truth 10. of the Doomsday, it is what makes one a good Muslim. A Muslim, 11. he relies on God. To rely, it means: whatever one receives, 12. he knows that it is God who has given it to him; whatever you do not receive, you know that it is God who
دِيْمِي يَا بَنَنَّا ا كَا دُ الله دِي يَا سِيْمِي يَا سَارَ الله دِي يَا سِيْمِي	diymay <sub>1</sub> ni'ʔi banana' 'ʔi ka' du <sub>1</sub> 'Il <sup>a</sup> h de ya' siymay <sub>1</sub> ni'ʔi sa'ra 'Il <sup>a</sup> h de y' seymay <sub>1</sub>	13. d'í mà . Ní í bànaná í k 'à d ón Ála dè y 'à s 'í mà , n'í sàra, Ála dè y 'à sé é mà.	13. hasn't given it to you. If you have fallen ill, you know that it is God who has sent it to you, if you

جَنِي اَلله دِ  
 يا دِ نِسْجِي  
 نَادَم دِن  
 سُرْل اَنَا  
 سَجِي  
 نا دِسِرِي اَنَا  
 سَجْنا كُفْنا  
 نا سَكْنا  
 قَارَ اَنَا  
 سَجِي نا  
 تِسِنْكَ  
 اَنَا سَجْنا  
 مِيْنِي سِنْكَرَ  
 اَنَا سَجْنا  
 مِيْن جُولَا  
 نا سَجْنا  
 مِيْن  
 سَكْلِل اَنَا  
 سَكْ وُ ثَمَ مَا  
 كَا اَلله دُن  
 نَكْبِي اَن  
 بَنْجِي و  
 بَمْكَ  
 گِيي<sub>3</sub>ey<sub>1</sub> 'Il<sup>2a</sup>h de y'  
 da nisek<sub>4</sub>yey<sub>1</sub><sup>0</sup>  
 ni'ʔadama den<sub>1</sub><sup>0</sup>  
 su<sub>1</sub>ru<sub>1</sub>la 'ʔ na'  
 sek<sub>4</sub>ey<sub>1</sub>  
 n' deseray<sub>1</sub> 'ana'  
 sek<sub>4</sub>-e na' ku<sub>1</sub>qu<sub>1</sub>na'  
 'ʔ n' sek<sub>4</sub>e na' f<sub>1</sub>a'ra  
 'ʔ na' sek<sub>4</sub>ey<sub>1</sub> na'  
 tisinu<sub>1</sub>k<sub>4</sub>-u<sub>1</sub>  
 'ʔ n' sek<sub>4</sub>-e n'  
 meynay<sub>1</sub> sinu<sub>1</sub>k<sub>4</sub>u<sub>1</sub>ra  
 ' n' sek<sub>4</sub>-e n'  
 meyn<sub>1</sub>a ġu<sub>1</sub>wlila' 'ʔ  
 n' sek<sub>4</sub>-e n' meyn<sub>1</sub><sup>0</sup>  
 sik<sub>4</sub>ilila 'ʔ na' sek<sub>4</sub>e  
 wu<sub>1</sub> tuma ma' ka'  
 'Il<sup>2a</sup>h du<sub>1</sub>n<sub>1</sub><sup>0</sup> nik<sub>4</sub>-ub  
 yey<sub>1</sub>ʔ'ani  
 ban<sup>0</sup>k<sub>4</sub>eyeyw  
 bim<sub>1</sub>u<sub>1</sub>k<sub>4</sub>-u<sub>1</sub>  
 wu<sub>1</sub> de bim<sub>1</sub>u<sub>1</sub>k<sub>4</sub>-u<sub>1</sub>  
 kisi 'Il<sup>2a</sup>h ma' 'ʔan<sub>1</sub><sup>0</sup>  
 kisiray<sub>1</sub>  
 'ʔ ba'na

14. Díŋe, Ála dè y'à  
 dá ní s ègen yé. Ní  
 ádamaden s òròla,  
 à ná sègen.

15. N'à d ésera, à  
 ná s ègen. N'à  
 kógòra, à ná sègen.  
 N'à fàara , à ná  
 sègen. N'à tí  
 sìngò,

16. à ná sègen. N'à  
 méena sìngò lá, à  
 ná s ègen. N'à  
 méenna jòli lá, à ná  
 sègen. N'à  
 méen(na)

17. sìgìlì lá , à ná  
 sègen. Wò tuma  
 màa ká Ála d ón ní  
 kó bée (?) yé, àní  
 bángé yé (?), wò  
 bée mòngò  
 Page 2

1. wò dè b é mòngò  
 kisi. Ála má án  
 kísira.  
 2. À banna.

die, it is God who has sent it to you.

14. The world, God has created it with sufferings. If a human being is born, he will suffer.

15. If he fails, he will suffer. When he arrives to maturity, he will suffer. If he is killed, he will suffer. If he is not asleep,

16. he will suffer. If he sleeps too long he will suffer. If he stands too long, he will suffer. If he

17. sits too long, he will suffer. So, man should know that God is everything, he is Creator (?), he

1. he saves man. May God save us.

2. It is the end.

## Text 4

Almamy Yattara's comment:

The possessor of the medical document for hernia that is named "kookily foura". The same Bory Bary. Written by his father Amadou Bary, a Muslim cleric. The copyist Almamy Malik Yattara in 1972 in San.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>15</sup> The original text:

	Transliteration	Transcription	Translation
نِييَ فُرَ كُمَيَّ كُولِ فُرَ فُرَ مِينْ ب كُولِ فُرَ ب. كُولِ - نَا بَنَّا أَ بَ بَرَكُرْ دِمِي	niyey <sub>1</sub> f <sub>1</sub> ura kumayey <sub>1</sub> ku <sub>1</sub> w kili f <sub>1</sub> ura f <sub>1</sub> ura miyn <sub>1</sub> <sup>0</sup> be ku <sub>1</sub> w kili f <sub>1</sub> ura k-e. ku <sub>1</sub> w kili - na' banana' 'ʔ bik-e baraku <sub>1</sub> ru <sub>1</sub> dimiyey <sub>1</sub>	1. Nìn yé fúra kúma y é, kókili fúra. 2. Fúra mín b é kókili fúrak é. Kókili, 3. n'à bànana , à bé ké bàrakɔɔdimi yé.	1. These are words of a medicine, a testicle (hernia) medicine. 2. A medicine which heals testicles. Testicles, 3. if there is a disease, it manifests itself as an ache of the lower belly.
وُ فُرَكْ سُو إِبْ كُولِ مُوْكَ	wu <sub>1</sub> f <sub>1</sub> urak-e suk <sub>4</sub> uw 'ʔiɛ bi k <sub>4</sub> uwkun <sub>1</sub> <sup>0</sup> muwk <sub>4</sub> a <sup>n</sup>	4. Wò fúrak ε súgu: é b é gòkun <sup>16</sup> mùgan	4. Here is a means to treat it: get twenty- one beans of the wonderbean plant (Canavalia ensiformis),
أَنْ كِلْ بُو بُو تَبْ كَا مُوْكَ سَبْ وُ تُمْ إِبَا وَرْ إِبْ تُمِيتْ كُكْ دُونِي	'ʔani kele bu <sub>1</sub> w 'ʔi bu <sub>1</sub> w tu <sub>1</sub> bi ka' mu <sub>1</sub> w ku <sub>1</sub> su <sub>1</sub> be wu <sub>1</sub> tuma 'ʔi ba' wu <sub>1</sub> ru 'ʔi bi tum <sup>0</sup> butu ku <sub>1</sub> k <sub>4</sub> -u <sub>1</sub> du <sub>1</sub> wniy <sub>1</sub>	5. àní kélen b ɔ́, í b'ò tóbi k 'à m ɔ́ kóɛɛɛ. 6. Wò tuma í b 'à wóɔ, í b é Tumbutu kògɔ dɔɔni	5. boil them till they are very well cooked. 6. Then peel them, put a little salt of Tombuktu
كَالْ فَادْ تَمِيَّ إِبَا سِيَّ سَكُونُ كَالْ دُتْكَ	ka' la f <sub>1</sub> a' k- timiyay <sub>1</sub> 'ʔi b' siyy <sub>1</sub> su <sub>1</sub> ku <sub>1</sub> nu <sub>1</sub> w ka' datuk <sub>4</sub> -u	7. k'à lá f 'à ká tímiya. Í b' à sɔ́ sɔ́ kónɔ k' à dátúgu	7. to make it mild. Put it in the house and close it
كَالْ سُو فَنِي دُتْكَ أَدَالْ نُتْكَ كِيَارْ إِبُوتْ كَا دُنْ فَكِي كُنْ بَرْ فَ نَجِيَّ بَالْ	ka' su <sub>1</sub> w f <sub>1</sub> anay <sub>1</sub> datuk <sub>4</sub> -u 'ʔ da' la niduk <sub>4</sub> -u k <sub>4</sub> iya'ra 'ʔi bu <sub>1</sub> wta ka' dun <sub>1</sub> <sup>0</sup> f <sub>1</sub> a'kiy <sub>1</sub> ku <sub>1</sub> nu <sub>1</sub> bara f <sub>1</sub> a' niǵiy <sub>1</sub> ba' la	8. kà só fána dátúgu à dá lá . Ní dùgu jéra 9. í b'ò tà k' à dún f' à k' í kónɔ bara fá. Ní jí b' à lá	8. and also close the door of the house. At dawn, 9. take it and eat it so that it fills your belly. If there is a juice,
إِبُو مِينْ نِيَّ نَكِلِنْ سُرْ إِبَا فَكْ كَالْ كِلْ بُو كَالْ دُنْ كَا بَرْ أَكْ وَ تَمِيَّ بِيَجْنُو	'ʔi bw miyn <sub>1</sub> . niyey <sub>1</sub> n <sup>0</sup> k <sub>4</sub> eleni su <sub>1</sub> ru <sub>1</sub> 'ʔi ba' f <sub>1</sub> ak <sub>4</sub> -a ka' kili bu <sub>1</sub> w ka' dun <sub>1</sub> <sup>0</sup> ka' haera 'ʔ k-a wu <sub>1</sub> tumay <sub>1</sub> 'ʔi biyǵan <sup>0</sup> tu <sub>1</sub> w 'ʔi yerae	10. í b 'ò mìn . N'í yé ngèlennin sòɔ í b' à fàga k' à kílì bó 11. k' à dún kà héra à kàn . Wò tuma í b 'í jàntó í	10 drink it. If you can get a ground squirrel, kill it, take its testicles 11. and eat them, and be reassured with it. Then abstain

le detantere de docimen medicalman pour le héri conapele kookili foura. le meme Bory Bary - eciri par son pere Amadou Bay marabou. le kopisste Almamy malick Yattara. a 1972 a san.

<sup>16</sup> It could be also *nkòkun* 'head of a species of locust', although the following context makes this interpretation less probable.

لَا مُوسُو فَيِ فَا كَسِي تِلْ مَكْ يُوْكَأْ وَ تُمْ ا ا كَبِيْرَى فَرَى اِيْكَأ تُكْ تُكْ نَى فَا كَا دَفَا نَا دَفَا رَا اِيْ نَا نَعْبَى اللّٰه كُوْ	la muws <sup>2</sup> u <sub>1</sub> w <sup>0</sup> f <sub>1</sub> ey <sub>1</sub> f <sub>1</sub> u' kasey <sub>1</sub> tile muk <sub>4</sub> - a y <sub>3</sub> u <sub>1</sub> wk <sub>4</sub> u <sub>1</sub> n <sup>2</sup> a' wu <sub>1</sub> tuma ' 'ʔi keneyaray <sub>1</sub> . f <sub>1</sub> uray <sub>1</sub> 'ʔabik-e ka' tuk <sub>4</sub> -u tuk <sub>4</sub> -u y <sub>3</sub> u <sub>1</sub> w nay <sub>1</sub> f <sub>1</sub> a' ka' daf <sub>1</sub> a' na' daf <sub>1</sub> a'ra 'ʔi na' naf <sub>1</sub> ayey <sub>1</sub> 'Il <sup>2a</sup> h ku <sub>1</sub> w	yèɛ lá mùsow fè 12. fó à ká sé tìle mùgan ɲògɔn ná . Wò tuma 13. í k éneyara. Fúra, à b é ké kà tùgu-tùgu ɲógɔn ná 14. f'à ká dáfá . N'à dáfára , í n 'à nàfa yé. Álakò	from women 12. about twenty days. then 13. you will be healed. The medicines follow each other 14. till it is completed. When it is completed, you will see its benefit. Provided that 15. the medicine be applied according to the instructions and with a reason. We shall benefit from it 16. if Lord agrees, for God.
فُرْ كَكْ نِكْلَنْ بِي نِي يِرْ بِي. اَمْبَا نَقَا سُرْ	f <sub>1</sub> ura kak-e nikalan <sup>0</sup> yey <sub>1</sub> niy <sub>1</sub> yiri yey <sub>1</sub> . 'ʔam <sup>0</sup> ba' naf <sub>1</sub> a' su <sub>1</sub> ru <sub>1</sub>	15. fúra ká k é ní kàlan yé ní yíri yé. Án b'à nàfa sòɔ,	15. the medicine be applied according to the instructions and with a reason. We shall benefit from it
نِي مَسَا. سُوْنَى مِيْنَبِي اللّٰه بِي.	niy <sub>1</sub> masa'. su <sub>1</sub> wnay <sub>1</sub> miyn <sup>0</sup> yey <sub>1</sub> 'Il <sup>2a</sup> h yey <sub>1</sub> .	16. ní Mása sònna mín yé Ála yé.	16. if Lord agrees, for God.

## Text 5

Almamy Yattara's comment:

The possessor of the document "cilissi foura" is again Bory Bary. Found in the belongings of his father Amadou Bary, a Muslim cleric. Copied by Almamy Malik Yattara in 1972 in San.<sup>17</sup>

Transliteration	Transcription	Translation
نَنْبِي كِلِسْ فُوْرْ بِي نَمْكَ بِنْنَا اِمْنَا بَنَّا	nin <sup>0</sup> yey <sub>1</sub> kilis-i fuwra yey <sub>1</sub> nimu <sub>1</sub> k <sub>4</sub> -u <sub>1</sub> banana' 'ʔi mana' bana'	1. Nìn yé kílísifura yé. Ní m ògɔ bàna, 2. í mána bàna
		1. This it a medicine for magic spell. If a person falls ill, 2. if you see that

<sup>17</sup> The original text:

le detantere de dociman de cilissi foura. tougoure Bory Barty tourve danles afer de son pere - Amadou Bary le marabou. copié par Almamy malick yattara a san en 1972 a san

كَلِيلَ بِي مُكْفَىٰ إِبَا بُلْمِن كَأَ شِيدِ بِي مَإِ فِ بَرِنِ تَكْ كَ كُنْجِي	k <sub>4</sub> eleyalen <sup>0</sup> yey <sub>1</sub> mu <sub>1</sub> k <sub>4</sub> u <sub>1</sub> f <sub>1</sub> ey <sub>1</sub> 'ʔi ba' bulu <sub>1</sub> mine ka' y <sub>3</sub> es-i yiri ma' wu <sub>1</sub> yirinin <sup>0</sup> tu <sub>1</sub> k <sub>4</sub> -u <sub>1</sub> k-u <sub>1</sub> kun <sup>0</sup> ʔey <sub>1</sub>	gèleyalen yé m ɔ̀gɔ fè, í b'à bólo mìnɛ 3. k'à nésín yíri mà, wò yírinin t ɔ̀gɔ kó kùnɛ.	the person is seriously ill, take him by the hand 3. and direct him to the plant whose name is <i>kunjé</i> (Guiera senegalensis shrub).
إِبَا فِ بِي مَإِ بَرِنِ كُنْجِي إِبَا بِي بَرِنِ بِي بَرِنِ كُرْ دِ بِنَا كُرْ فِرْ كِي بَنَابَا سَرِي مَإِ كُرْ بِلْ أَمْسِي كَ بَنَا كُرْ فِرْ كِي كَ كُنْجِي	'ʔi ba' f <sub>1</sub> u <sub>1</sub> yiri ma' yiriba' kun <sup>0</sup> ʔey <sub>1</sub> 'ʔie de yey <sub>1</sub> yiri ku <sub>1</sub> ru <sub>1</sub> yey <sub>1</sub> yiri ku <sub>1</sub> ru <sub>1</sub> de bibana' ku <sub>1</sub> ru <sub>1</sub> f <sub>1</sub> urakaey <sub>1</sub> . banaba'tu <sub>1</sub> ní <sup>n</sup> 'ʔa seray <sub>1</sub> ma' ku <sub>1</sub> ru <sub>1</sub> w <sup>0</sup> bela 'ʔu masey <sub>1</sub> ka' bana' ku <sub>1</sub> ru <sub>1</sub> f <sub>1</sub> urakey <sub>1</sub> ka' keneya' kun <sup>0</sup> ʔey <sub>1</sub> .	4. í b 'à f ɔ̀ yíri mà yíriba kùnɛ. É dè yé yíri kòɔ yé, yíri 5. kòɔ dè b é bàna kòɔ fúraké. Bànabaatɔ, ní à séra màa kòɔw bée lá 6. ù má sé kà bàna kòɔ fúraké k'à kénɛya. Kùnɛ	4. You say about the plant, <i>kunjé</i> big tree. You have seen a big tree, it is an old 5. tree that heals old disease. A sick person, if it was a question of any old person, 6. they could not treat old diseases and heal them. <i>Kunjé</i> ,
مُيْبِلِ نِفَرِ بِي مِينِ بَا كَ لُولِ تَلِيلِ نِكْرَنْفِي بُلْ نِبَابِ بُلْ نُورْدُكْ بُلْ بِي وَتْمِ إِبَا بِي بِي ذُونِي وَتْمِ إِبَا بُلْكَرْ بَانَبِي إِبَا مَرِ إِبَا بِنَابَا كَسُو إِبَا نُبْ بَنَابَا بَا مَ كَا كَا مَ كَا كَا فُو سِينِي	m <sup>0</sup> biydeli nif <sub>1</sub> ura yey <sub>1</sub> miyn <sup>0</sup> bi'ʔi k-a buluw <sup>0</sup> la tilebebulu niku <sub>1</sub> ru <sub>1</sub> n <sup>0</sup> f <sub>1</sub> ey <sub>1</sub> bulu niba'f <sub>1</sub> a bulu niwu <sub>1</sub> ru <sub>1</sub> duk <sub>4</sub> -u bulu yey <sub>1</sub> wu <sub>1</sub> tuma 'ʔi byɔ̀u <sub>1</sub> y <sub>1</sub> du <sub>1</sub> wu <sub>1</sub> niy <sub>1</sub> wu <sub>1</sub> tuma 'ʔi bulukari f <sub>1</sub> a'n <sup>0</sup> bef <sub>1</sub> ey <sub>1</sub> 'ʔi bu <sub>1</sub> w mara 'ʔi bitana' yey <sub>1</sub> 'ʔi kasu <sub>1</sub> w 'ʔi ba' tu <sub>1</sub> bi banaba'tu <sub>1</sub> ba' mi ka' ku <sub>1</sub> w ka' mi ka' ku <sub>1</sub> w ka' ku <sub>1</sub> w f <sub>1</sub> u <sub>1</sub> w siy <sub>3</sub> isek <sub>4</sub> -i	7. n b 'í déli ní fúra yé mín b 'í kàn búluw lá tìlebinbulu 8. ní kóɔɔnɛbulu ní báfanbúlu ní wòrodugubulu yé, 9. wò tuma í b 'í j ɔ̀ dɔ̀ɔni, wò tuma í b'òlú kári fàn b éɛ fè, 10. í b 'ò màra í b é táa n'à yé í ká só , í b'à tóbi, bànabaatɔ 11. b'à mìn k 'à kò k'à mìn k 'à kò k 'à kò fóo sìɛ séegin	7. I beg you, if all the medicine that you have in foliage, the western foliage 8. and eastern foliage, and northern foliage and southern foliage, 9. then stay a little bit, then cut it everywhere, 10. keep it and bring it to your house, cook it, let the sick person 11. drink it and wash him, let him drink it and wash him, and wash him, up to eight times 12. during eight days. The sick person will recover. Let him wait a little 13. again eight days, if he has not
تَلِيلِ كُنْ بَنَابَا بَكْنِيَا مُيْدُونِي تَكْ بِلْ سِكْ نَا مَا كُنْجِيَا	tilesek <sub>4</sub> -i ku <sub>1</sub> nu <sub>1</sub> w bnba'tu <sub>1</sub> 'ʔa bkeneya'. ' b' muy <sub>3</sub> udu <sub>1</sub> w <sup>0</sup> niy <sub>1</sub> tuk <sub>4</sub> -u tile sek <sub>4</sub> -i na' m' keney'. 'ʔi bisek <sub>4</sub> -i	12. tìle séegin kónɔ. Bànabaatɔ, à b é kénɛya. À b 'à mùɔɔ dɔ̀ɔnin 13. túgun tìle séegin, n'à má	12. during eight days. The sick person will recover. Let him wait a little 13. again eight days, if he has not

بِسْكَ بِئَلْتَكْ	'ʔe bif <sub>1</sub> u <sub>1</sub> lu <sub>1</sub> tak <sub>4</sub> -e	kénɛya, í b'á sègin, é bé fólɔ tá ké	recovered, repeat it, do it as for the first time
بَاكَ سِدَانَا إِبْتَا سَوَا بَا تَبِ كَا فُلْ تَا بَكْنِي.	f <sub>1</sub> a' k-a seda'n'a' 'ʔi bita' su <sub>1</sub> w 'ʔi ba' tu <sub>1</sub> bi ka' k-e f <sub>1</sub> u <sub>1</sub> lu <sub>1</sub> ta' y <sub>2</sub> u <sub>1</sub> k <sub>4</sub> u <sub>1</sub> n <sup>0</sup> yey <sub>1</sub> .	14. f'à ká sé dàn ná. Í bé táa só, í b'á tóbi k'à ké fólɔ	14. till the end. Go home, cook it and do it
فُوسِ بِي سَبْكَ نِينْبَات مَا كِنْيَا	fu <sub>1</sub> w siy <sub>3</sub> ey <sub>1</sub> sek <sub>4</sub> -i nibnba'tu <sub>1</sub> m' keneya'	15. tá nògɔn yé , fóo sì nɛ séegin. Ni bànaabaatɔ má kénɛya	15. like the first time, and so, eight times. If the sick person has not recovered
وَلْ وَتْمَ بِسَا. وَ بِي كُنْجِي فُورِ بِي تَت	wu <sub>1</sub> la w tuma 'ʔ bisa'. wu <sub>1</sub> de yey <sub>1</sub> kun <sup>0</sup> ǵey <sub>1</sub> f <sub>1</sub> uwra yey <sub>1</sub> tt	16. wò lá, wò tuma à b é sà. Wò dè yé kùnǵɛfura yé.	16. this time, then he will die. It is the medicine of <i>kunǵɛ</i> .
أَبَانْ	a ba'n <sub>1</sub> a	17. À banna.	17. It is the end.

##### 5. Grammatological properties of the Bamana Ajami from San

Table 1: Independent units of the Bamana Ajami orthography

Letter	Transcription	Phonemic value	Transliteration
ا	∅	∅	,
ب	b	/b/	b
ت	t, c	/t/, /tʃ/	t
ح	h	/h/	h
ج	j	/dʒ/	ǵ
د	d	/d/	d
ر	r	/r/	r
ز	j	/dʒ/	z
س	s	/s/	s
ص	s	/s/	ʃ
ف	f	/f/	f <sub>1</sub>
ق	g	/g/	q
ك	k	/k/	k-
خ	g	/g/	k <sub>4</sub>
ل	l	/l/	l
م	m	/m/	m
ن / ن <sup>18</sup>	n; vocalic nasality	/n/	n <sub>1</sub> / n
ي	ɲ	/ɲ/	y <sub>3</sub>
ه	h	/h/	h
و	w; length of u, o, ɔ	/w/, /V:/	w
ي	y, ɲ; length of i, e, ε	/j/, /ɲ/, /V:/	y
ي	ɲ	/ɲ/	y <sub>2</sub>

<sup>18</sup> In final position.

## Comments:

- ح appears only in the name of the Prophet محمد | <mḥmd> Muḥammad.
- ز is used representing *j* only once in an Arabic loan, i.e. زَكَا | <zak'> *jáka* 'alms' (3:5) (from Arabic *zakāt*)
- ص appears only once, in an Arabic loan, i.e. صَلِّ | <ṣalila> *sáli lá* 'with a greeting' (3:1) (from Arabic *ṣalā*).
- ع appears only once (2:15), with its meaning remaining unclear.
- ق (with two upper dots as in Mašriqī) representing *g* occurs only once, i.e. in the word كُنَّا | <ku<sub>1</sub>qu<sub>1</sub>na'> *kógra* 'arrived to maturity (perfective form)' (3:15).
- *Nūn* in word-final position appears usually without a dot, i.e. as ن. However, the dotted variant, i.e. ن, is also encountered in the texts.
- The usual graphemic representation of *n* as ن (with two lower dots and one upper dot) never appears in word-final positions. If a word has *n* in the final syllable, ن is always followed by ي. Therefore, it is impossible to figure out which Arabic character served as its base, i.e. ب or ي.
- ي is used representing *n* in only one single case, i.e. سَيِّى | <siyey<sub>1</sub>> *sìjɛ* 'time' (1/2:6) (which may be a copyist's or author's error).
- ي appears in the texts only twice, i.e. in يُمَوْنِي | <y<sub>2</sub>umawn<sup>0</sup>y<sub>3</sub>y<sub>1</sub>> *nùman yé* 'it is good...' (3/1:8), and in يَكْرِنِي | <y<sub>2</sub>u<sub>1</sub>k<sub>4</sub>u<sub>1</sub>n<sup>0</sup>y<sub>3</sub>y<sub>1</sub>> *nógn* *yé* 'with each other' (5:15).

- Prenasalization of initial consonants is marked in the same manner as word-internal nasalization by a *nūn* with a *sukūn*, i.e. نْ | <n<sup>0</sup>>, such as in نْكِلِن | <n<sup>0</sup>k<sub>4</sub>eleni> *ngèlennin* 'ground squirrel'. Compare also a form كُو | <k<sub>4</sub>u<sub>1</sub>w> *gò* 'wonderbean (*Canavalia ensiformis*)' (4:4) which is attested in Charles Bailleul's dictionary (2007) as *ngò* (the prenasalization in this word might be absent from the dialect of the manuscript's author).

### 5.1 Diacritics

*Fatha*, *kasra*, and *ḍamma* are used for representation of *a*, *i*, and *u* respectively, while *sukūn* represents the lack of any vowel (in fact, it used only with *nūn*).

*Tašdīd* is rarely employed representing gemination of a nasal sonant as in e.g. كُنَّا | <ku<sub>1</sub>lu<sub>1</sub>n<sup>2</sup>a> *kòlon ná* 'to the well' (1/2:9) - mostly it is used with unclear purpose, e.g. دِمَسَّوْ | <dimis<sup>2</sup>aw<sup>0</sup>> *dénmisenw* 'children' (1/1:16). Also, it occurs in Arabic loans in order to reproduce the original orthography, e.g. اَلْجَنِّ | <ʔal<sup>0</sup>ġan<sup>2</sup>a> *àlijana* 'Paradise' (3/1:9), جَهَنَّمَ | <ġah<sup>2</sup>an<sup>2</sup>ama><sup>19</sup> *jàhanama* 'hell' (3/1:9).

In the Bamana Ajami orthography, new diacritics have been introduced for the representation of middle vowels: an 'inversed *ḍamma*', i.e. ُ | <u<sub>1</sub>>, representing *o* or *ɔ*, as well as a lower dot, i.e. ̣ | <e>, representing *e* and *ɛ*. There is also a combination of lower dot + *fatha*, i.e. ̣̣ | <ae>, which represents the open front vowel *ɛ*, and which is used only

---

<sup>19</sup> The *tašdīd* on top of the *hā'* was put here mistakenly by the writer.



in text 4: هَبْر | <haera> *héra* 'be in peace' (4:11), يَء | <yerae> *yèrɛ* 'self' (4:11).

Generally, vocalic diacritics are provided. However, they may be omitted from time to time, apparently due to negligence of the writer or copyist.

Diacritics representing vowels which are not preceded by a consonant are placed on top of a supporting 'alif hamza, i.e. ا | <'?> or ا | <'?i>, such as e.g. in ا | <'?u> *ù* 'they' (1/2:6), ا | <'?e> *é* 'you (singular emphatic)' (1/2:3).

Vocalic nasality is marked either by *mīm* in word-internal position, when the nasal vowel is followed by a labial consonant, or by *nūn* with *sukūn*, i.e. ن | <n<sup>0</sup>>, in all the other contexts, e.g. كَرَنْتِلْ كَلْمَبَا | <karan<sup>0</sup>tela ku<sub>1</sub>lu<sub>1</sub>m<sup>0</sup>ba'> *Karantɛla kàlɔnba* 'big well of Karantela' (1/1:1), يَنْ | <yan<sup>0</sup>> *yàn* 'here' (1/1:1). Not infrequently, the nasality remains unmarked in word-final positions, such as e.g. دُ | <du<sub>1</sub>> versus دُنْ | <du<sub>1</sub>n<sup>0</sup>> *dón* 'to know' (1/2:1) (both spelling variants appear in the same line), بَابْ | <ba'f<sub>1</sub>a> *bá fàn* 'North' (1/2:7), أَبْيِي | <'?a bif<sub>1</sub>iyey<sub>1</sub>> *à bí fíyen* 'he will become blind' (1/1:6), كَبْ | <kele> *kélen* 4:5 'one'. More rarely, and probably by negligence, it also remains unmarked in word-internal positions, as e.g. in دَنْكُودْ | <den<sup>0</sup>kuwdi> *dénkundi* 'baptism' (1/2:8). When followed by the plural marker -w /ù/, nasality is never marked in the spelling of vowels - e.g. دُكُلُوْ | <duk<sub>4</sub>lew<sup>0</sup>> *-dúgulenw* 'natives' (1/2:2), دُنُوْ | <dunaw<sup>0</sup>> *dúnanw* 'strangers' (1/2:1), نِيدُوْ | <nidew<sup>0</sup>> *ní dénw...* 'if children...' (1/2:3).

The syllabic nasal *ń*, which occurs in the first singular pronoun of Bamana is featured in the texts only once, where it is followed by a labial

consonant and expressed by a *mīm* with a *sukūn*, e.g. مُبِيدِل | <m<sup>0</sup>biydeli> *ń* *b'í déli* 'I beg you' (5:10). Supposedly, in all other contexts it is rendered by *nūn* (in the same way as prenasalization and syllable-final nasal).

Vowel length is marked irregularly: بِيَاسُرْ | <beya' su<sub>1</sub>ru<sub>1</sub>> *b'éε y'à* *sòrɔ* 'all have found it...' (1/1:1), but تَتَبَّطْ | <tiy<sub>3</sub>batu> *tìɲɛbaatɔ* 'truthful' (3/1:3). On the other hand, letters marking vocalic length in Arabic orthography, i.e. ا , ي , and و , may appear where there is no vocalic length in Bamana: نَانَ | <na'na> *nàna* 'came' (1/1:3), سَمَاسِينْ | <sama'sen<sub>1</sub><sup>0</sup>> *sàmasen* 'buttress' (3/1:3), مِينْ | <miyn<sub>1</sub><sup>0</sup>> *mín* relativization marker (3/1:2).

Quite regularly, vocalic assimilation (usually referred to in the description of Bamana as "elision") is expressed by a letter representing a long vowel in Arabic orthography, particularly when the resulting vowel is a long *aa* or *oo*: أَكْنَآيَ كَا لَجَى | <'ʔu kana' yey<sub>1</sub> ka' laǵey<sub>1</sub>> *ù kàn'à* [kànáà] *yé* *k'à* [káà] *lájé* 'they should not see it' (1/1:4), إِبُو ثَبِ | <'ʔi bu<sub>1</sub>w tu<sub>1</sub>bi> *í b'ò* [bóò] *tóbi* 'you will cook it' (4:5). If this assimilation results in an *i*, it is represented as a separate syllable: In such a case, *ii* is written as *kasra* below a supporting 'alif hamza, with an additional *kasra* on the preceding letter, i.e. إِي | <i 'ʔi>; e.g. كَإِسِينْ كُو | <k<sub>2</sub>-i 'ʔi sen<sub>1</sub><sup>0</sup> ku<sub>1</sub>w> *k'í sèn kò* 'to wash your feet' (2:6).

Very frequently, word-finally 'length letters' are encountered which do not express any length in Bamana Ajami orthography, as they do in other orthographic traditions, e.g. وَكُجَى | <wu<sub>1</sub> ku<sub>1</sub>f<sub>1</sub>ey<sub>1</sub>> *wò kɔ́ fè* 'after that' (1/1:11), سُمَى بِيْنَى | <sumay<sub>1</sub> by<sub>3</sub>y<sub>1</sub>> *sùma bí ɲè* 'food will be abundant' (1/1:13), سَكُو | <suk<sub>4</sub>uw> *súgu* 'sort' (4:4).

The plural marker, /ù/, is rendered by a *wāw* with a *sukūn*, i.e. وْ | <w<sup>0</sup>> as in e.g. مَا كُرُوْ | <ma' ku<sub>1</sub>ru<sub>1</sub>w<sup>0</sup>> *màa kòrɔw* /màa kórúù/ 'old people' (1/1:3).

The author of the texts makes an effort to maintain the original orthography in Arabic loans, although he does not always succeed, as e.g. in اَلْكَیَوْمَ | <'ʔal<sup>0</sup>kiyaw<sup>0</sup>ma> *àlikiyama* 'Doomsday', which should rather be الْقِيَامَةُ | <'alqiya'mt̃> *al-qiyāma*. In any case, the author writes Arabic loans which have undergone phonological changes following Bamana Ajami orthographic tradition, such as e.g. جَنِي | <ǧiy<sub>3</sub>y<sub>1</sub>> *jínɛ* 'world' (cf. Arabic *dunyā*) (3/1:14), هَيَّرَ | <haera> *héra* 'be in peace' (cf. Arabic *ḥayra*) (4:11).

### 5.1 Orthographic segmentation of words

Segmentation of written speech into graphic words in San Bamana Ajami is more or less orderly (especially in comparison with the specimens published in Vydrine 1998). Content words are normally written separately and are fused together only rarely, e.g. as in مَا تَبْنِمَا پِي | <ma' tibenima' yey<sub>1</sub>> *Màa tɛ bèn ní màa yé* 'people do not meet each other' (literally 'a man does not meet a man') (1/2:9).

Postpositions are mostly, albeit not always, written together with the preceding word, e.g. اِدِي دُكُلُنِي | <'ʔe de yey<sub>1</sub> duk<sub>4</sub>ulen<sup>0</sup>yey<sub>1</sub>> *é dè yé dùgulen yé* 'you are the native' (1/2:4), تَلَبِي أَنْكُرُنِي | <tilebif<sub>1</sub>ey<sub>1</sub> 'ʔaniku<sub>1</sub>ru<sub>1</sub>n<sup>0</sup>f<sub>1</sub>ey<sub>1</sub>> *tilebi fè àní kórɔn fè* 'on the western side and on the eastern side' (1/2:6). Monosyllabic auxiliaries (predictive markers) are usually written together with either the preceding or the subsequent word.

In some instances, derived words are split up orthographically in accordance with their morpheme boundaries, e.g.  $\text{دُكْ لَلا} \mid <\text{du}_1\text{k}_4\text{-u}_1 \text{ lila}'>$  *dògoli lá* 1/2:9 'secretely'.

## 5.2 The dialectal characteristics of the texts

The manuscripts are written in a Bamana variety quite close to what is today Standard Bamana, with certain features typical of the eastern dialects, such as the imperfective marker *bí*, as opposed to *bé* in Standard Bamana.

Most often, the lexeme for 'person' appears in its eastern dialectal form, i.e.  $\text{مَا} \mid <\text{ma}'>$  *màa* (1/1:3,5:5). However, occasionally it may also appear in the western dialectal form, i.e.  $\text{مُكْ} \mid <\text{mu}_1\text{k}_4\text{-u}_1>$  *mògɔ* (5:1). Throughout all the manuscripts, western forms predominate, e.g.  $\text{تُكْ} \mid <\text{tu}_1\text{k}_4\text{-u}_1>$  *tógɔ* 'name' (1/1:8, 3/1:1, 5:3 ) (cf. the eastern form *twàa*).

Occasionally, intervocalic velars are elided, as for example in  $\text{سِييِي} \mid <\text{siyy}_1>$  *sìi* 'to sit' (4:7) (cf. Standard Bamana *sìgi*), or  $\text{نُونَى} \mid <\text{y}_3\text{u}_1\text{w nay}_1>$  *ɲón ná* 'to each other' (4:13) (cf. Standard Bamana *ɲógɔn ná*). Elision of intervocalic velar consonants is typical of Maninka and Mandinka languages spoken in the western part of the Manding area, but also for numerous Manding variants on the southern and eastern periphery of that area.

Also, at times archaic forms are encountered in the texts, such as e.g.  $\text{كَيَا} \mid <\text{k}_4\text{iya}'>$  *gíya* 'to grow clear' (4:8) (cf. Standard Bamana *jé* or *jé-ya*, Proto-Manding *\*xóyi*, and in certain Maninka varieties *gé*).

## References

- Bailleul, Charles (2007). *Dictionnaire Bambara-Français. 3e édition corrigée*. Bamako: Donniya.
- Creissels, Denis, Sidia Jatta & Kalifa Jobarteh (1982). "Lexique Mandinka-Français". *Mandenkan* 3:1-207.
- Vydrin, Valentin (1998). "Sur l'écriture mandingue et mande an caracteres arabes (mandinka, bambara, soussou, mogofin)". *Mandenkan* 33: 1-87.
- Vydrin, Valentin (2008). "To be respectful in Mande – Where does Maninka honorific vocabulary come from?", *Mande Mansa: Essays in honor of David C. Conrad*, ed. by Stephen Belcher, Jan Jansen & Mohamed N'Daou, 216-225. Zürich, Berlin: Lit.
- Yattara, Almamy Maliki & Bernard Salvaing (2000). *Almamy, une jeunesse sur les rives du fleuve Niger*. Brinon sur Sauldre: Grandvaux.
- Yattara, Almamy Maliki & Bernard Salvaing (2003). *Almamy, l'âge d'homme d'un letter malien*. Brinon sur Sauldre: Grandvaux.